Development Board for backward region of Maharashtra

*138. SHRI NARESH PUGLIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra has sent a communication to the Prime Minister for setting up a Development Board under article 371(2) of the Constitution for the backward region of Maharashtra;

(b) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to call a joint meeting of Members of Parliament belonging to Maharashtra and the Chief Minister of that State with the Prime Minister to take early decision in this regard;

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) if so, by when Government would call the meeting?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) The Government of Maharashtra have sent proposals at different points of time for setting up of Development Board in terms of article 371(2) of the Constitution. The latest was received in March, 1991.

(b) At present there is no such proposal under consideration of government.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Free call centres at certain places in Delhi

*139. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whehter M.T.N.L. has announced a bonanza of free calls centres at certain places of Delhi to commemorate 45th Independence of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to extend this bonanza to other important places of Delhi like Railway Station and Inter-State Bus Terminal;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government propose to provide similar facilities at important places of States and Union Territories; and

(f) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a), (b), (e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Government has decided to provide free telephone service with only local call facility at all Distric, Hospitals and major hospitals in cities all over the country. These telephones are being provided near emergency/casualty wards of the hospitals.

(c) and (d) There is no such proposal under consideration at present. Free telephones have been povided in hospitals for emergencies as a life saving help to the patients. Railway stations, Bus terminals, etc. do not fall in his category. However, pay phones/public telephones are provided at such places.

Arrest of foreigners having links with CIA AND LTTE

*140. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any foreigners having links with CIA and LTTE had been apprehended in Bombay in July this year;

(b) if so, the details in this regard indicating the nature of their actvities; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) No such report has come to notice.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Open telephone junction boxes in Delhi

397. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of open telephone junction boxes are existing all over Delhi;

(b) whether it is also a fact that through these open junction boxes fraudulent calls are being made by tapping these boxes;

(c) whether Government have assessed the loss of revenue to the Department as a result of calls made from these junction boxes; and

(d) what steps are being taken by Government to check the illegal use of the boxes?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) No Sir, telephone junction boxes are normally kept closed and locked. Any junction box reported to be broken or found opened is locked again as soon as it come to notice.

(b) Open junction boxes provide possibility for misuse by unscruplous elements. Hence these are kept locked.

(c) In view of above there is no perceptible loss of revenue to the Department.

(d) All the junction boxes are normally kept locked. There are regular patrolling parties who keep a vigil on the junction boxes.

Upgradation of Sonari telephone exchange of Sibsagar, Assam

398. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 600 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 2nd January, 1991 and state by when the upgradation of the present Sonari Telephone Exchange at Sibsagar, Assam, which is under construction would be completed and start functioning?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): Upgradation work is going on by installing two numbers of 128 lines C-DOT Electronic Exchanges. The exchanges are targetted for commissioning by middle of October, 1991.

National Highway in Assam

399. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of money annually sanctioned by the Centre for improvement and maintenance of National Highways in Assam during the last three years;

(b) the amounts spent by the State Government and the amount returned unspent during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) The details of the amounts allotted and actually spent for the maintenance and improvement of National Highways